

Message Text

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ORIGIN EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 AID-20 EB-11 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00

RSC-01 L-03 ADP-00 DODE-00 PM-09 NSC-10 SS-15 /119 R

DRAFTED BY EUR/ WE: GHSHEINBAUM/ EA: WHSULLIVAN: MS

4/3/73 EXT 23063

APPROVED BY EA: WHSULLIVAN

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R 032059 Z APR 73

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

INFO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USDEL FRANCE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 061228

E. OL 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAID, VS, VN, CB, LA

SUBJ: BELGIANS ASK ABOUT U. S. AID PROGRAM TO INDOCHINA

1. BELGIAN AMBASSADOR LORIDAN CALLED ON DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY SULLIVAN APRIL 2 RE U. S. PLANS FOR AID TO INDOCHINA. THE U. S. IS NOT YET READY TO CONSULT WITH OTHER COUNTRIES RE AID TO INDOCHINA, AMBASSADOR SULLIVAN SAID. WE ARE FAR FROM REACHING ANY CONCLUSIONS, FAR FROM ANY CONCEPT OF HOW A PROGRAM MIGHT BE ESTABLISHED, AND FAR FROM A DECISION ON HOW TO DEAL WITH CONGRESS ON THIS MATTER. AMBASSADOR SULLIVAN ASSURED LORIDAN THAT THE U. S. PLANS TO HAVE CONSULTATIONS, FORMAL OR INFORMAL, WITH OTHER POTENTIAL DONORS AND THAT WE DO NOT WISH TO GO IT ALONE. HE SAID THAT WE MAY REACH CONCLUSIONS ABOUT A PROJECTED PROGRAM IN MAY.

2. IN ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM, SULLIVAN POINTED OUT THAT THERE WERE SHARP DIFFERENCES BETWEEN AID PROGRAMS FOR SOUTH VIET- NAM, LAOS, AND CAMBODIA, ON THE ONE HAND, AND NORTH VIET- NAM, ON THE OTHER. THE FORMER WERE WILLING
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TO WORK WITH CONSULTATIVE GROUPS AND INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS SUCH AS IBRD AND ADB. THE LATTER INSISTED ON STRICTLY BILATERAL AID PROGRAMS.

3. THE PROBLEMS IN SVN, LAOS AND CAMBODIA WILL HAVE TO INCLUDE A CONSIDERABLE MEASURE OF HUMANITARIAN RELIEF FOR REFUGEES AND OTHER WAR VICTIMS, BUT THERE IS ONLY LIMITED DAMAGE TO INFRASTRUCTURE. THERE WILL ALSO BE MAJOR PROBLEMS OF MAINTAINING CURRENCY STABILIZATION IN THOSE THREE COUNTRIES. IN NVN, THE PROBLEM CENTERS LARGELY ON THE HEAVY DESTRUCTION OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND THE ECONOMIC BACKWARDNESS THAT RESULTS FROM THE STAGNATION OF A LONG WAR.

4. AFTER LORIDAN COMMENTED THAT THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN SVN IS NOT REASSURING, AMBASSADOR SULLIVAN STATED THAT THE NORTH VIETNAMESE, ONCE THEY SIGN AGREEMENTS, SEE HOW FAR THEY CAN STRETCH THEM. FOR EXAMPLE, THEY CONTINUE TO RESUPPLY THEIR FORCES IN SVN DOWN THE HO CHI MINH TRAIL RATHER THAN THROUGH ICCS CHECKPOINTS. IT IS NOT POSSIBLE, SULLIVAN ADDED, TO THINK OF PROVIDING ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO THE NORTH VIETNAMESE WHILE THEY ARE STILL CLANDESTINELY SENDING MILITARY EQUIPMENT TO THEIR FORCES IN SVN. HE EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT OUR FRIENDS WOULD FEEL THE SAME WAY. RUSH

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts:
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 03 APR 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: hilburpw
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973STATE061228
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: GHSHEINBAUM/ EA: WHSULLIVAN: MS
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: RR
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: SECSTATE WASHDC
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730432/aaaahnat.tel
Line Count: 92
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ORIGIN EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: hilburpw
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 AUG 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <29-Aug-2001 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <29-Oct-2001 by hilburpw>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> gwr 971120
Subject: BELGIANS ASK ABOUT U. S. AID PROGRAM TO INDOCHINA
TAGS: EAID, CB, LA, VS
To: BRUSSELS
EC BRUSSELS
FRANCE
SAIGON
THE HAGUE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

